The World.

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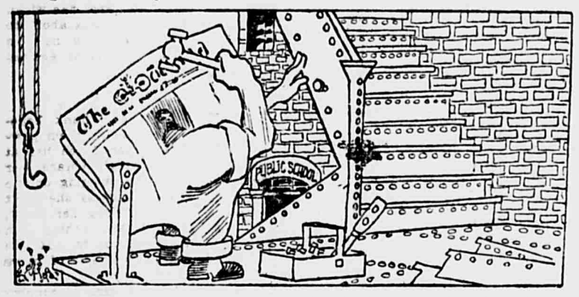
SCHOOLS, NICKELS AND SUBWAYS.

NEWSPAPER of wide circulation like The Evening World is certain to accomplish results whenever it is right and has the facts. Its power comes not from the mechanical process of putting so many words on so much white paper, but from the force of public opinion, which when any question of great importance is presented in a concrete form is sure to make itself felt.

This power of public opinion is what induced the Railroad Committee of the Assembly to report a Five-Cent Coney Island Fare bill. Originally introduced by Assemblyman Wagner, the Republican majority of the committee were so convinced of its popularity that they have dropped the Wagner bill and reported substantially the same thing, with themselves as authors.

About this neither Assemblyman Wagner nor The Evening World cares. What both of us are interested in is not who shall get the credit of the passage of the bill, but that the people shall get the benefit of the five-cent fare.

Even more important than the Coney Island five-cent fare is the making safe of the public schools.



The Collinwood disaster, where 180 children lost their lives because of bad school-house construction and insufficient arrangements for exit, caused The Evening World to make an investigation of the school-houses of New York. Many of the school-houses are old and have not suitable means for speedy escape in case of fire. This should be at once remedied.

The city now owns fifty-nine vacant school sites, unloaded on the city to enable political real estate speculators to make big profits at the taxpayers' expense. Things like this, and not the real necessities of the public schools of New York, are what account for an educational expenditure of $28,469,764 for 1908—more than twice as much as in 1899.

Every old school building should have provided both inside and outside separate stairs from every floor. No chance should be taken of having the escape of the school children cut off, as at Collinwood, by a fire at the main entrance.

For the cost of only a fraction of the money paid for needless gewgaws and trimmings every school-house could be made safe. If there had been some way of juggling with the stairway specifications as with the hose specifications somebody with a pull would have long since loaded the school-houses with fire-escapes. If there had been some way to buy stairways from the manufacturers and unload them on the city at double prices, like Kissena Park, there would be a surplus of stairways lying around as there are unused school sites.

It is evident that the only way that the people of this city can get what they are entitled to is for them to insist on it and prove their desire by their votes.

By this process the people may even get more subways. Comptroller Metz has at last discovered that perhaps the city debt limit is not exhausted after all, and that the city sinking fund revenues are ample to build a city tri-borough subway if they were not diverted from their real purpose.

Let the people keep on. New York or any other city has the kind of government and is the kind of place that its people make it.

"In the Spring the Young Man's Fancy"---

By Maurice Ketten.

It Doesn't Promote Harmony in the Home, or Elsewhere, to Discuss the Age of People When a Woman Is Around

By Roy L. McCardell.


Roy L. McCardell

"JUST twenty years ago to-day we had the great blizzard, and now look what nice weather we're having," said Mr. Jarr.

"Well, it ought to be nice weather after twenty years," said Mrs. Jarr.

"Seasons are the same, no matter how many years pass," said Mr. Jarr, "and I hope we won't have any blizzards now. You remember how the snow lay piled six feet in the streets for weeks and weeks?"

"Me?" said Mrs. Jarr, innocently. "Why, how should I remember what happened twenty years ago! I was a mere child then."

"Yes, you were!" snorted Mr. Jarr. "Hey! look here, after a while you'll be telling people I'm old enough to be your grandfather!"

"Well, you are much older than me," said Mrs. Jarr, blandly. "You can't deny that."

"I'm two years older than you, and that's all," said Mr. Jarr, "and you remember the great blizzard as well as I do—I know that!"

"I don't remember," said Mrs. Jarr.

"Oh, you remember it all right!" said Mr. Jarr. "But you are like the rest of the women; you forget the past. Why, there's that Mrs. Billups. She is six years older than I am, and was leaving school when I was in the primary class and when she was sixteen and I was ten she used to drive me out of her parlor when I would be there playing with her little brother when her beaus came. Yet you've heard her say a dozen times that we were schoolmates."

"I think men are more spiteful than women any day!" said Mrs. Jarr. "If that is all poor Mrs. Billups does, and she's a good soul, I don't think you should go around making her out to be your granny!"

"Oh, how touchy we are about other people this morning!" said Mr. Jarr. "I'll admit you look younger than you are, but"—

"But, but what?" asked Mrs. Jarr. "I suppose you tell people I was an old maid when you married me!"

"Who'll I discuss it with?" asked Mr. Jarr. "Do you think men sit down and discuss how much younger they are than their wives, or how much older they are?"

"They won't discuss how much older they are," said Mrs. Jarr with some asperity; "they are too vain. I could name certain people who powder their noses and who are very particular as to how they comb their hair to cover the coming bald spots!"

"Well, I'm not getting bald because I'm old," said Mr. Jarr. "My father was bald at thirty. And I don't powder my nose. You saw me powder it once when I was on a fishing trip and got sunburned."

"I well remember that fishing trip. The sunburn was carried aboard the boat in bottles," said Mrs. Jarr icily.

"I was talking about the blizzard"— began Mr. Jarr.

"Oh, bother your old blizzard," snapped Mrs. Jarr. "Why don't you ask me if I don't remember the Mexican War, or if I was with Betsy Ross and helped her make the first United States flag?" Mrs. Jarr was strong on Betsy Ross because she was a Daughter of the American Revolution.

"And, furthermore," said Mr. Jarr, "since you are so juvenile that you can't remember the blizzard, don't you be getting off the old scream, 'I was a mere child when I was married,' before company. When little Emma is fifteen, don't go around saying that everybody takes her for your sister and that you were married at her age, and"—

"What are you trying to do?" asked Mrs. Jarr. "Do you want to pick a quarrel this morning?"

"Yes, I do!" said Mr. Jarr, who was mad by this time. "And I'll pick it about this age question, too!"

"Not with me," said Mrs. Jarr, calmly. "You may be getting so old that all you can talk about is the hard winter of 1849, when you were a boy—but I won't."

"Eighteen hundred and forty-nine when I was a boy!" gasped Mr. Jarr. But Mrs. Jarr only smiled and pushed him gently out. Her hand was in his vest pocket, unnoticed by Mr. Jarr, and she smiled again after Mr. Jarr was gone. She had been picking herself—and successfully.

Letters from the People.

1892, 1896, 1904, 1908.

To the Editor of The Evening World:

What were the dates of the last four leap years (1908 included)?

E. W., Ossining, N. Y.

A Queer Argument.

To the Editor of The Evening World:

A fire has been started in a stove and let burn a week or more without going out. Is that the same fire as when started? A says it is the same fire. B says it is not, as it is being shaken down daily to get the ashes and clinkers out, so that by the end of the week there is nothing left of the original fire. A says that as long as some fire remains and kindles the new coal it is the same fire as it was a week before, as it had never gone entirely out. Will readers discuss this odd query? W. H. H.

A Matter of Beauty.

To the Editor of The Evening World:

Scientists now claim that man is more beautiful than woman. Man never was beautiful. I have seen many men who were extremely good-looking handsome men, with harmoniously proportioned features, but features that were hard and rugged, and as such cannot be termed beautiful. For the word "beauty" implies also a softness of outline and a delicacy of mold, or why is there is no startling number of mere men who would plead guilty. The word mollycoddle is still in use, or else can be resurrected. Man does not appeal to or satisfy the aesthetic nature or faculty. Moreover, "beautiful" matches well with the good and the true, and men of the present generation, speaking candidly man to man, do you consider yourselves good and true? Oh, pitfle! Men may possess vivacity, wit, good nature or other pleasing qualities, and for these reasons may be considered attractive, but not beautiful. Oh, mere man! it is too good to be true that we are more beautiful than the "fair sex," and therefore it is not. Let the lassies speak up.

B. F. S.

Firemen in Schools.

To the Editor of The Evening World:

The suggestion to have firemen in our schools is a good one and should meet the approval of every father and mother. A fireman should be detailed to each school. It would inspire confidence both in principals, teachers and pupils. By letting the commissioner pick out his own men for places of this kind you could depend on getting good, sober, watchful men.

P. S. C. E.

Yes.

To the Editor of The Evening World:

I was born in the year 1880 on Good Friday. Did Good Friday fall on April 17 in that year?

A. S. K.

Legal Aid Society, 239 Broadway.

To the Editor of The Evening World:

I would like a little legal advice. Not being able to pay for it, where should I apply?

Mrs. B.

No.

To the Editor of The Evening World:

Is there or was there ever an electric car put up in New Jersey by the Edison company?

Juvenile Courtship

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM IN DARKTOWN.

By F. G. Long

The Story of the Operas

By Albert Payson Terhune.

NO. 44—MEYERBEER'S "THE PROPHET."


JOHN.

JOHN, son of Mother Fides, the old Leyden innkeeper, loved and was loved by Bertha, a gentle peasant girl whom he had once saved from drowning. Fides approved the match and promised to turn over her inn to the young couple. But by feudal law Bertha could not marry without the consent of the Count of Oberthal, overlord of the region. She and Fides, therefore, went one day to Oberthal's castle to seek his needful permission. On the road they came upon a mob of armed peasants who were listening eagerly to the preaching of three wild looking men. This trio of preachers—Zacharia, Jonas and Mathisen—belonged to a strange sect known as Anabaptists. They proclaimed a sort of Anarchistic government and an overthrow of all wealth and power.

As a beginning to their campaign, the three were now urging the peasants to storm the castle of Oberthal. In the midst of the harangue the Count himself drew near, followed by his servants and guards. He scornfully dispersed the mob, ordering the three preachers thrashed. As the crowd scattered Bertha and Fides timidly advanced and made their plea. But the Count, struck by Bertha's beauty, refused to allow her to marry John. When the girl and Fides protested he ordered them both under arrest. • • •

John sat waiting impatiently at the inn for Bertha's return. While he waited the three Anabaptists entered. They were struck with the mystic light in his eyes, and saw he was the man for whom they had sought, the fanatic whom they might set us as Prophet of their new creed, and by whose seeming miracles they could work upon the credulity of the masses. This impression was strengthened when John told them he had twice dreamed he stood crowned as monarch, and heard the multitude acclaim him as the heaven sent reincarnation of King David. But when the three hinted that they might make him King, John only laughed and bade them begone, saying he would rather rule in Bertha's heart than over the whole world.

Scarce had the Anabaptists left the room when Bertha rushed in. She had escaped from Oberthal's soldiers, and had fled to John for refuge. He hid her in an inner room just as Oberthal and his guards came to the tavern door. The Count still held Fides captive, and vowed the old woman should die if Bertha were not at once delivered up to him. Torn between love and filial duty, John, in wild despair, was at last forced to drag Bertha from her hiding-place and give her to the Count. Left alone in his horror of grief, the unhappy lover was found by the returning Anabaptists. Mad with longing for vengeance on Oberthal, John consented to join the strange sect as their Prophet in the hope of freeing his country and of slaying the man who had wrecked his life. • • •

With John at its head the Anabaptist cause gained thousands of followers. Peasants and townsfolk, believing in the Prophet's divine mission, flocked to his standard. Oberthal's castle was burned to the ground. The Count himself, coming disguised into the Anabaptist camp, was captured. From him John learned that Bertha had again escaped and was at Munster. The Prophet accordingly ordered a general attack on the place. Munster was the capital city and strongest fortress of the district. Its fall would mean everything to the Anabaptists. • • •

Munster was carried by assault. John arranged that he should be crowned Emperor in the great cathedral there. Bertha and Fides had found their way to the city and met in the public square on Coronation Day. As they were mourning John's supposed death (having heard that he had been murdered, by the mysterious "Prophet's" orders), the coronation procession crossed the square. Fides followed it into the church. Recognizing John as the crown was about to be placed on his brow, she ran forward to greet him. John impulsively held out his arms to the old woman. Then, remembering he was supposed to be of heavenly origin and could therefore have no earthly parents, he checked himself. Fides in happy amazement hailed him as her son. The people murmured wonderingly. John hit upon a masterpiece of trickery to save himself. He loudly denied that he was her son and bade the guards slay him if she should repeat her claim. He well knew that Fides's love for him would make her seek to save his life at all hazards. Nor was he mistaken. The poor mother muttered that she had lied and that she had never before seen the Prophet. • • •

Meantime, the German Emperor, with an overwhelming army (including Oberthal, who had escaped from the Anabaptists) was marching upon Munster. He sent word to Zacharia, Mathiesen and Jonas that if they would betray John the three might escape free with all their wealth. They gladly accepted the bribe, knowing their forces could not withstand the stronger enemy. Fides had, at John's order, been imprisoned. The Prophet sought her in her cell and begged her forgiveness. She spurned him. He pleaded for her former trust. She ordered him to earn that love and trust by confessing his imposture. In an agony of remorse, he consented. Just then, guards brought Bertha before him. She had entered the palace to slay the Prophet for her lover's murder. Recognizing him, she stabbed herself and fell dead at her former lover's feet.

News of his betrayal by the three Anabaptists was brought to John. He ordered the palace vaults filled with gunpowder. During the coronation feast the German Emperor's officers, headed by Oberthal, and accompanied by Jonas, Zacharia and Mathisen, burst in upon the revels. John gave a secret command and the palace was rent by a terrific explosion. Under the falling walls all were crushed to death. As the palace collapsed Fides ran forward and threw her arms about John, offering him her forgiveness and dying with him.

"The Elixir of Love" (last of this series) will be published to-morrow.

NIXOLA GREELEY-SMITH

Writes About

The Flirting Woman.


NIXOLA GREELEY-SMITH

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW has come to the defense of the flirting woman. He has said of her that she is a sensible, well-balanced person who exercises her power of selection in choosing a husband.

I am glad that at last a good word has been spoken for the woman flirt. She needs it. There is probably no woman alive—certainly no wife—who has not at one time or another been called a flirt. For according to the masculine standard of flirting as applied to women, we must all come under the classification of flirts who do not follow, spiritually at least, the ancient Japanese custom of blackening our teeth, pulling out our eyebrows and otherwise proving our devotion to our husbands, if we have them, by making ourselves hideous to all other men. Of course, we do not undergo the actual disfigurements. But the wife of a jealous man must so often warp her natural gayety and childlike pleasure in admiration as to be spiritually scarcely less deformed.

In discussing the ethics of flirtation we get back to the ancient conundrum of whether or not women should propose. For as they are not permitted to express a direct choice, they must of necessity choose indirectly, by inuendo, by coquettish playing of the men who want them against the man they want. And this of necessity entails flirtation.

If women proposed—I am not saying they should, for I don't believe in looking for trouble—there would be an end of flirtation. If convention permitted Angelina to say: "Edwin, will you be mine?" she would never be compelled to work up a madness in Algernon's breast in order to bring Edwin to the proposal point. Algernon's heart would not be broken for a week or two after the wedding and Edwin could never say: "How can you pretend that you have never loved any one but me when you admitted before we were married that Algernon had proposed to you? At least, don't take me for a fool!"

But it is a question whether we should sacrifice the delights of flirtation and take upon ourselves the responsibility of proposing just to deprive men of the privilege of suspecting our singleness of heart. Once a woman is in love with a man she ceases to see him as he is. It is only during the initial period of flirtation that she has a chance to look his qualities over and decide whether or not he will make a good husband.

And this, all sensible women, as the sensible Mr. Shaw remarks, endeavor to do.

The Mystery of Human Life.

By Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.

IT seems to me that there are, when all is said, but two ways of regarding the mystery of human life. Either give it up, the whole thing, as a tragedy too black for respect, and give up with it all the beautiful beliefs which have come into it from some source of unutterable patience, or heroic faith, writes the author of "The Gates Ajar," in Harper's Bazar—give up, frankly, God and goodness, Heaven and happiness, faith and purity and peace—give up all that makes life tolerable, death cheerful, pain reasonable, and hope possible—or else accept the system of things at its worst, candidly admit its monstrous perplexities, and boldly swing the whole array of them over into the gaze of a sweet reasonableness which sees in the blackest of them the shadow of the eternal sun. If we make angels of our spectres, we need not be afraid. In a word, if we can see in the worst facts of this life an argument for their justification or even their explanation in another, we have gained a point of view of which the most brilliant sceptic in this scoffing world cannot deprive us.